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Washington bureau

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BUFFALO EVENING NEWS

The *Buffalo Evening News* has had a bureau in Washington for more than half a century but only four men have served it as bureau chief. Two of these have been president of the National Press Club, two of the Gridiron Club, and the incumbent bureau chief will be president of the Gridiron Club next year. Available records do not reveal any other Washington bureau that has provided that many presidents of journalistic organizations in the nation's Capital.

The first bureau was opened in 1921 by Alfred H. Kirchhofer. It was a one-man operation, at the start, became a two-man bureau during Kirchhofer's tenure, and did not expand to a three-man staff until forty years after Kirchhofer came to Washington. Three men, including the bureau chief, comprise the present reportorial staff.

Kirchhofer was chief of bureau until 1927, when he returned to Buffalo as managing editor, later the executive editor, of the *Evening News*. While he was in Washington he was active in National Press Club affairs, serving a year as president, and, while a member of the Board of Governors, participating actively in planning for the National Press Building.

James L. Wright became bureau chief in March, 1927, when Kirchhofer went back to Buffalo. Wright did not become president of the Press Club but he did serve as president of the National Press Building Corporation, an office requiring both journalistic and managerial talents. Wright served as bureau chief until he retired in 1952. He was president of the Gridiron Club in 1934.

Nat Finney, who had been editor of the editorial page of the *Minneapolis Star*, was named bureau chief in January, 1953 and served in that capacity until January 1, 1969, when he retired. He still writes occasional articles for the paper as a contributing editor. He was Gridiron Club president in 1968.

Lucian Warren came to Washington in 1945 as correspondent for the *Buffalo Courier-Express*, the city's morning newspaper, and served as that paper's Washington bureau chief until 1968, shifting to the *Evening News* a short while before Finney retired. He took over from Finney as head of the *Evening News* bureau and is its current chief.

In 1955, while still with the *Courier-Express*, Warren was elected president of the National Press Club and was the first president to be sworn in by Earl Warren, then Chief Justice of the United States. As of this writing Warren is vice-president of the Gridiron and will move up to the presidency in 1975.

Evening News Washington correspondents have won journalistic honors for outstanding reporting. Finney won a Pulitzer prize and the Raymond Clapper award for his reporting of President Trumans, plan to impose censorship on the ordinary activities of federal agencies.

Warren, while still with the *Courier-Express*, was given the Ernie Pyle award for spot coverage of the Vietnam war.

The current staff of the bureau consists of Warren, Roland A. Powell, Ronald J. Maselka and Joan Kiser. Warren, Powell and Maselka are reporters; Joan Kiser is the Secretary. She is the oldest member of the staff in point of tenure, not age, and has been described as the "glue that holds the bureau together."

A small staff obviously cannot cover all of the complex and perplexing news of Washington, so the *Evening News* men divide their coverage into three beats, leaving the rest to other news services received by the paper. Warren covers the White House and, for certain stories of specific interest, the State Department. Powell's beat currently, is the economic situation and the energy crisis. He used to cover the Senate and the Supreme Court

but took over energy and economics when those became hot issues. Maselka spends most of his working time at the Capital, keeping in touch with legislators from the Buffalo area and covering specific stories of particular interest to his newspaper.

Warren often travels with the President at home and abroad. He went to Moscow with Nixon in 1963. In 1971 he took a nine-weeks trip to Eastern European countries, interviewing leading government officials, winding up the tour at Hong Kong for a look at the Mainland China situation.

A special project of Warren's was a series of taped interviews with all members of the Nixon Cabinet and White House staff. The interviews ran as a series—one a week in the *Evening News* in 1970-71.

Maselka also did a series on campus disturbances which won for him an award by the National Association of University Professors.

Warren says that his bureau has one advantage over some others in these days when many afternoon papers are printed in the morning and many morning papers in the evening. He can make the final edition of his afternoon newspaper up to 4 p.m. He is the envy of some afternoon paper bureau chiefs who must put their copy on the wire by noon, or earlier, if they expect to make today's paper.

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